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MEMORIAL ADDRESS

OF

HON. J. M. ROBINSON,

OF INDIANA,

UPON THE

LIFE AND CHARACTER

OF

HON. WM. S. HOLMAN,

(Late a Representative from the State of Indiana,)

DELIVERED IN THE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

JULY 8, 1897.

WASHINGTON.
1897.

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Mr. W. A. Smith

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The House having under consideration the following resolutions—

Resolved, That the business of the House be now suspended that opportunity may be given for tributes to the memory of Hon. WILLIAM S. HOLMAN, late a representative from the State of Indiana.

Resolved, That as a mark of respect to the memory of the deceased, and in recognition of his eminent abilities as a distinguished public servant, the House at the conclusion of these memorial proceedings shall stand adjourned.

Resolved, that the Clerk communicate these resolutions to the Senate.

Resolved, That the Clerk be instructed to communicate a copy of these resolutions to the family of the deceased—

Mr. ROBINSON of Indiana said:

Mr. SPEAKER: When a member of this Chamber has performed his mission faithfully and well; when the nation has seen one, at an early age, enter into the performance of a conscientious public duty, and has seen his sun cross its meridian and sink to its setting place in the West, and he still in the performance of that duty, without a blot or stain upon him, it is fitting, indeed, that his colleagues should assemble in this solemn meeting, and the nation, through the lips of its representatives, should proclaim its sanction and erect a monument of words and thought to such able and distinguished public service.

Beautiful is the custom to honor those whom we knew so well in life, but whose vacant chairs remind us that they have gone "to that bourne" from which we can not recall them, save by kind words, in gentle memories, and thus we meet to-day to perform this sad yet pleasant duty, to weep with those who weep, to solace by kind words the bleeding heart, to offer a generous nation's tribute to the dead.

To call our associates back as we knew them and loved them in life, to commune with them across on that beautiful shore, to remember how we joined in their joys and shared in their sorrows, to call them back on this memorial day, sad and solemn as it is, must always be a pleasant task.

It is passing strange, but true—it is serious to reflect upon it—that one who but a few short weeks ago met with us here in council, took part in our deliberations, and made this Hall vocal with his arguments and discussion of public questions, in so short a time, from the smiles and pleasant greetings with which he met us at this desk, has passed to the silence of the tomb.

The true Indiana heart throbs to-day with an unwonted pride at this generous outpouring of Representatives and countrymen to honor the memory of Indiana's distinguished son, who fought for so many years on this floor, amid the plaudits of his country, a battle for retrenchment and reform in expenditures of Government. Such fidelity should be written with a "pen of diamond on tablets of gold."

Judge HOLMAN omitted no opportunity to learn the needs of his country; he watched with a jealous care the rights of his constituents; he guarded the people's Treasury and protected their interests, and though some may have criticised and others may not have known his doings, yet the thoughtful and just gave due credit, and the venerable legislator in this and in the applause of his own conscience found an ample reward. Others may have had a more brilliant career; others may have received applause more ephemeral but louder, but the record of a public benefactor will never die. He that watches over the interests of all at all times makes an impression that sinks deep into the hearts of his countrymen.

The record of Judge HOLMAN will live in history for ages, when you, sir, who occupy that chair, and you, my colleagues, who listen to my voice—when you and I and all of us shall have passed away, his record will live on as a proud and magnificent example of purity in private life and public station, adherence to the cause and interest of his people, praise and gratitude of a confiding and satisfied constituency, a record which younger statesmen may well follow with pride to themselves and satisfaction to their country.

The reminiscences of Judge HOLMAN'S career, his long service here, save as it is known to history, I leave to older members and worthier tongues than mine; but it is meet that one from his own State, proud of him, though young in the councils of the nation, should pay his tribute and voice his commendations of a career such as has been unfolded by the older members of the House.

Indeed, one's being here to-day may be due to the study of such famous sons of Indiana as Hendricks, Voorhees, McDonald, and HOLMAN, whose fame in Congress sheds an imperishable grandeur on Indiana's illustrious name.

Judge HOLMAN'S death closes a characteristic career essentially his own. The curious may wonder why a life in Congress was devoted to the specialty of opposition to appropriations and Government expenditures, a task sometimes not fully understood, and sometimes not fully appreciated. It must be remembered, however, that though Judge HOLMAN watched with a special care the matter of appropriations—a duty imposed by his committee assignments—yet he was always alert and active, and took a deep interest in all the great questions before the country. He was qualified

by nature and equipped by study to master the economic questions of public expenditures, and by a faithful performance of a duty which he felt incumbent upon him he saved many millions of public money, and I believe that the history of the nation will not disclose his parallel in the lines pursued by him. "None but himself could be his parallel."

By care and patient industry he acquired a knowledge of the country's needs, and beyond those lines no man dared go without meeting his objection. Censure and criticisms came to his lot, as they have to all public men, from the time that the illiterate burgher wanted to banish Aristides for being called "the Just," down to the present hour, but he knew, as others have learned, that censure is a tax one pays to the public for being eminent, and he heeded it not.

Always fearless in the performance of his duty, he made it his standing policy to "hew to the line, let the chips fall where they may." Amid the rugged storms of clashing interests, swept by the washing waves of private greed, on this policy he stood, as firm and unaffected as St. Helena in the midst of the ocean. Complaints were met by a kindness of manner and a continued faithful performance of duty, and opposing right to special interest, he turned aside the shafts of criticism and exemplified that "only the actions of the just smell sweet and blossom in the dust."

With a vigorous energy and persistence in opposing public extravagance, no one ever truly charged him with dishonesty or malevolence. He did not seem to work for short-lived popular applause, but was willing to submit to the test of time for an approval, knowing after all that ambition is but the shadow of a dream. Sallust said of Cato that the less he coveted glory, the more he obtained of it. So was it with Judge HOLMAN.

I will not dwell on the sobriquets "Watchdog of the Treasury" and "Great Objector." These are known through the land, and in the home of the humble are as indissolubly connected with his name as they are with the sacredness and safety of the people's Treasury.

What he saved to the country will never be known. I only repeat the language of an eminent member of this House when I say that Judge HOLMAN, each term of his career, saved to the nation a sum equal to that which placed upon yonder hill that monument of pride and beauty that reminds us of the immortal fame of the father of our country.

The principles of economy and democratic simplicity were engraven on his soul; nor did he seek to cast off these inborn traits, but rather cultivated them by his surroundings and associations.

Is man molded by his environments? Go to that Indiana home, stand upon the summit of that bluff, within view of the Ohio

River and three States, and tell me not that Judge HOLMAN did not imbibe a deep sense of the great obligations upon him. Living in that rural home, to look about him would bring up a train of associated ideas. One would be led up the Ohio and up its tributaries to the East, down with its waters and back again through the great rivers of the West. Standing on the threshold of that mansion, looking down upon the wrinkled waters of that mighty river, he gathered within the sweep of his perceptive mind and eye a landscape, including countless fertile farms in valleys and glens on lofty hillsides, embracing within this magnificent view three of the great States of the nation, Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana.

These scenes of his boyhood days, mature manhood, and ripe old age taught the statesman his duty to commerce, to the States, to the nation. These scenes, the resultant thoughts, made him democratic in all his acts, words, and bearing.

Judge HOLMAN loved his country home, and thither he would go when his Congressional labors were over, and there meet in true democratic simplicity the people he loved. He loved mankind, and he believed that the pinnacle of ambition was reached when he did good to his fellow-men. He was known to every man, to every woman, to every child, almost, in his district, and it is a pleasure to mention, as it is a compliment to his name to say it, that the children of his district, with childlike glee, saluted this great legislator as "Uncle Billy," and thus they warmed his heart.

I have never seen more sincere sorrow than was depicted on the face of every man, woman, and child at his burial. A statesman who so lives will be remembered by sorrowing friends and associates after death, and thus erects for himself a monument more enduring than marble and brass.

This great man, with his public life and triumphs, also had his private sorrows. He loved his family and his friends as every true man loves his; in domestic feelings and affections as kind and tender as a philosopher. A year before his death a sad bereavement came in the death of his wife. While engaged in gentle banter on their mutual frailties from age, this couple, indissolubly united in affections by the ties of half a century, were separated in a moment of unawares by the swift and noiseless hand of death, one passed to the realms of heaven, her eternal reward, the other left to mourn, and in a year to follow and meet "in that tranquil sphere the loving wife he mourned for here."

When the partner of his joys and sorrows, in a moment of bliss and contentment, almost without warning, was stricken down, it broke his heart. He could guide his steps with wisdom along the snares and pitfalls of public life; he could meet the storms and

tempests of acrimonious debate; he could bear the "whips and scorns" of unjust censure; but when this companion of half a century was stricken, it burst his tender heart.

Many who knew him well thought he would never survive the shock; but philosophy triumphed, and with the confidence of his constituency he returned again to the scenes of his former labors.

This election made him the father of the House, and, commencing his sixteenth term, he served long enough to exceed the service of any other man, living or dead.

Judge HOLMAN served in all the Congresses from the Thirty-sixth till the present time, with three breaks in his continuous service, two for one term, the Thirty-ninth and Fifty-fourth Congresses, and one for two Congresses, the Forty-fifth and Forty-sixth. He had served in his own State of Indiana as prosecuting attorney, judge, member of the constitutional convention, and member of the State legislature.

When he came here to serve in his last session of Congress, his reception in this Chamber was both cordial and complimentary, and in the nature of an ovation. Members of the Fifty-fourth Congress and new members of this Congress sought a personal acquaintance with the Father of the House, whom they had known for years as a national legislator, and the older members renewed their acquaintance with happy reminiscences, while the employees of the House, who knew him to love him, gave a cordial greeting. With a youthful fervor he returned these kindly greetings, and in these circumstances and surroundings was not written that "death rides on every breeze and lurks in every flower."

He entered into his work with characteristic vim and energy, and none who saw him during the first days of the session but would have predicted more years of useful life.

Personal to myself, I will say that, as a new member from his own State, I felt the touch of his kindly influence and good will. What members of this body endear themselves to the beginner? To whom will kindnesses be shown as years roll on? Of whom will kind remembrances be cherished in after years? Go ask it of each new member, and the answer will be, "Those who show us marked and early kindness." Such a one I found Judge HOLMAN to be. Complimenting me on my first effort in this august body, he little dreamed that my next would be in praise of him.

Judge HOLMAN closed on the 22d day of April, 1897, at the age of 75 years, a remarkable and successful career of honest patriotism and statesmanship, and left, at this ripe old age, the scenes of his long labors with the confidence and esteem of his colleagues, the admiration of the thoughtful, and the applause of his countrymen, all of which was evidenced by the universal tone of the press,

according him an unsullied honor, a high sense of public duty, persistence in right, which traits made him a useful public servant in life and makes his death a national loss.

Indiana mourns with the nation the loss of WILLIAM S. HOLMAN, and we seek consolation in the thought that for a lifetime he served acceptably and well that nation; and now, after a life's work devoted to her service, when he had overlapped that threescore years and ten allotted to man, he is suddenly called, still in line of duty, and a grateful country lays him to rest, like a weary sleeper, under the shadow of the oak beneath the myrtle on the green hillside of his native Indiana home, where the weary sleeper may sleep on while the forest bird sings over him its sweetest song.

In this Chamber he fought his battles and culled his laurels: he sleeps to-day in the heart of a grateful constituency. These are honors supreme.

With a consciousness of duty well performed, with applause of constituency and of country, with a long life of devotion to his country's needs, with gratitude of citizens, States, and nation, the heart of ambition is filled. [Applause.]

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